

Norton Asks for Resumption of Classes for Gallaudet K-12 Students- October 13, 2006

Norton Asks for Resumption of Classes for Gallaudet K-12 Students and
New Approaches if Shutdown Impasse Continues

October 13, 2006

Washington, DC—The Office of Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) today released a letter she wrote to Gallaudet University Acting Board Chair, Dr. Brenda Jo Brueggemann, and Dr. I. King Jordan, the University's President, expressing deep concern about the continuing dispute between the administration and protesting students, particularly her special concern for children in grades K-12, whose "educational needs are greatest," but are unable to attend school on Gallaudet's campus. Norton said, "Whatever the issues with University governance, the primary and secondary schools are a separate matter, and these children are innocent victims of a dispute in which they are in no way implicated. These children should be allowed to resume their schooling immediately." The Congresswoman said that she hopes that the promised meeting with the incoming president occurs and proves fruitful, otherwise, "new approaches to reach a quick end to the shutdown of the campus and an eventual settlement of the dispute must be found."

The Congresswoman sent the letter because Gallaudet is located here in the District, because the University receives most of its support from annual federal appropriations and because three Members of Congress are voting trustees, but are not believed to be here because Congress is currently out of session.

The full text of Norton's letter follows.

October 13, 2006

Dr. I. King Jordan
President
Gallaudet University
Washington, DC

Dr. Brenda Jo Brueggeman

Acting Chair, Board of Trustees

Gallaudet University

Washington, DC

Dear President Jordan:

I am writing out of deep concern regarding the continuing dispute between the administration, on one hand, and Gallaudet University students on the other, with no apparent end in sight, and my special concern for children in grades K-12, who are unable to attend their schools on the campus. I write not only because Gallaudet is located here in the District of Columbia, but also because of the considerable federal involvement in the University, including three Members of Congress who are voting trustees, reflecting the fact that the University receives two-thirds of its funding in annual federal appropriations. As you are aware, the University has many admirers, including me, among Members of Congress. Because Congress is out of session, the three congressional trustees are not in Washington as far as I know, but I believe that their concerns would mirror mine concerning the extended shutdown of the University. This letter is not addressed to the underlying issues, but the trustees, administration, and students together will be held responsible both for the risk to the University, including its reputation and the education process itself brought on by a forcible, if peaceful, takeover of the premises, and for the failure to find a way to bring the matter to a conclusion. In addition, I am deeply concerned that children in grades K-12, whose educational needs are greatest, also are unable to attend school. Whatever the issues with University governance, the primary and secondary schools are a separate matter, and these children are innocent victims of a dispute in which they are in no way implicated. These children should be allowed to resume their schooling immediately.

The matter has escalated and appears to have hardened. I hope that the meeting with the new president occurs and proves fruitful. Otherwise, I believe new approaches to reach a quick end to the shutdown of the campus and an eventual settlement of the dispute must be found. I would be happy to speak with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Cc: Speaker Dennis Hastert

Leader Nancy Pelosi

Rep. Ray LaHood

Sen. John McCain

Rep. Lynn Woolsey

MPD Asst. Police Chief Gerald Wilson